John Christie
his Book London
May 25th 1769

William Christie Purchased
this Book from John Christie
Callon: June 30th 1775

William Christie having died
January 5th 1812 this Book
now belongs to Robert Christie

CHRIST ON HIS THRONE.

OR,

Christs Church-government briefly laid downe; and how it ought to bee set up in all Christian Congregations.

Resolved in sundry Cases of Conscience.

IER. 6.16.

Thus saith the Lord; Stand ye in the wayes, and see and aske for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall finde rest for your soules.

LVKE 19.27.

But those mine Enemies, which would not that I should raigne over them, bring them hither and slay them before me.

Printed in the yeare 1640.

THE PREFACE
To the Reader.

IT is an obſervation as true as ancient, that ſuch workes of God as are done immediatly by himſelfe alone, though for their excellent greatneſſe farre ſurpaſſing not onely mans apprehenſion, but even admiration itſelfe, yet are done by him without any rubbe or difficulty at all. Such was that glorious and magnificall worke of Creation. But ſuch workes as God doth by inſtrumentall meanes, as by man, the greater they be, the greater difficulties they are attended with, and meet with many impediments. And this is moſt ſeene in great and ge-

nerall Reformations of Churches or States. Even Christ himselfe, The onely Potentate, *the* Mighty God, *when hee came to restore and re-erect the Tabernacle of* David, *which was fallen downe, to wit, his spirituall Temple or Church, what opposition did hee meet withall? what sweat did it cost him, before hee could finish this glorious and wondrous worke? In which respect the Antients were wont to say, That God with his word alone created the world; but it cost the life of his onely begotten sonne to redeeme the world: for this was opposed by Devills and men. And so it was with the type of Redemption, Israels deliverance from Egypt, where Gods mighty wonders and plagues upon Egypt, found a proud and hard hearted* Pharaoh, *with his blinde Egyptians obstinately resisting to the very last. So in the reparation of the Temple in Jerusalem, there wanted not most malignant spirits, envious men, as* Tatnai, Shether Boznai, Tobiah, *and* Sanballat, *who mocked*

Acts 15.16.

Ezra 5.6. Nehem.4.

mocked and accused the Iewes to the King, and by force sought to hinder the worke. And therefore can wee wonder, when in the proceeding of so great a worke of reformation as we see begun in our dayes (nothing inferior (all circumstances considered) to that deliverance from Egypt, or to the restauration of religion after Babylons captivity) difficulties and impediments both great and many have and doe interpose themselves? which when wee see wee should not be discouraged; for discouragement in such cases is an argument and consequent of a mind too much relying upon outward meanes, which while they prosper, they are as a good gale filling the sayles of our hope to attaine the wished Port. 'But when an adverse winde begins but to whistle a little up, we are afflicted, and are ready to cast away our hope, being left as a ship without an Anchor floating, and without a rudder driven with every winde, ready to bee split on every rocke or shelfe. 'But in such a

Cum reflavit affligimur. Cic.

case, we must, as in the first place look up unto God the great master of the winds, yea and mover of the mindes of the violent men: So herein behold and observe the beaten wayes of the Lord, how hee is pleased in all such great works to suffer himselfe and his people to bee opposed. And this he doth for speciall reasons, as to shew forth the deepe wisdome of his providence, in circumventing his adversaries, to crosse and thwart them even in those great and good workes which himselfe will have to be done, and certainly purposeth to accomplish, & which he calleth them unto, and commandeth them to doe, that so he may take them off from trusting in the outward meanes, though never so faire, and might teach them still and stedfastly to trust in his helpe, in his strength, in his faithfulnes, and not to cease to call upon him and depend on his promise, who will certainely save, and fully answer the prayers of his people, and in the happy issue of the work, that his glory may in all shine forth the

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more clearely, when nothing shall be left in man to glory in, but that we may give all the honour and praise of the worke to him alone.

Againe, in all such great workes of generall Reformation, especially of Religion, the difficulties prove to be the greater, by how much the vices and corruptions to be purged out (as we see in naturall bodies) are and have been of longer continuance; and such also as have received strength (under pretence at least) even from the Lawes themselves, and by universall consent of the whole State. Nor only this, but there is also in our natures a kinde of Antipathy against that purity and power of Religion, which ought to be the maine end that all true Reformations should aime at. And besides all this, although the corruptions be so grosse, and of so high a nature, as they proclaime themselves intollerable grievances, no longer to bee borne, but doe by a kinde of necessity presse to a Reformation: yet there

stands

ſtands ſo great a gulfe in the way, as untill it be removed, or ſo made up, as to be made paſſable, it will be found no eaſie matter to compaſſe ſo great a worke. Now this gulfe is ignorance, and that of a long ſtanding, contracted partly through a generall ſecurity and ſloth, and partly through the want of meanes, while through the ſubtilty of the Prelates, and cowardiſe of their inferiors, the Light hath been put under a Buſhel. So as though the ſenſe of our Ægyptian burthens hath at length let us ſee in a great meaſure our miſery, yea, and though God in his great mercy hath put into our hands ſuch an opportunity of Reformation, even armed with a kinde of neceßity to worke it: Yet how unreſolved are many men of the manner and meaſure of this Reformation, and what God requires at our hands herein? Yet can we not be otherwiſe perſwaded, but that all good men would joyne together, quickly to goe through with this great worke, did they but apprehend it to bee

as well a matter of Conſcience, as of grievance. For which cauſe, I have in theſe ſtraits of time, thought it one part of my duty which I owe unto Chriſt, and to his Church, to propound, and briefly to reſolve (as God hath enabled me) ſome important Caſes of Conſcience, which (hoping they may conduce to the furthering of the great buſineſſe now in agitation concerning Religion) I have adventured moſt humbly to recommend unto the ſeriou consideration of this moſt juſt, ſage and grave Senate, as to which not only I, but all the people of the Land doe owe our beſt ſervice, and for whoſe happy ſucceſſe of all their grave Counſels, we are all bound daily, and that in a more than ordinary manner to ſolicite (as we ſtill doe) the throne of Grace, that the Spirit of Chriſt may be abundantly poured forth upon this moſt Noble Aſſembly, in all wiſdome, and underſtanding, and in all judgement, zeale, courage, conſtancy, unity, unamity in the love of the Truth, that

such a perfect Reformation may be wrought as Christ at this time calleth for, as his word appointeth, as all Gods people every where thirst after, and as the whole Antichristian faction is afraid of, that so, when Christ alone shall be set upon his Throne over our soules, to rule us according to his word, and to dwell among us by his Spirit, the Kings throne may be for ever established in justice and judgement, and Gods people in this Land may enjoy both inward and outward peace unto the day of Christ, and so our posterity after us may blesse God, and for ever call this Parliament, The blessed Parliament.

Let the Reader correct as here he sees cause.

Errata.

PAge 4.line 1. reade 3.*hundred*. l. 11. blot out 1. p.6.l.12.r. *possibly be*. l.20.r.*as is usuall*. p.7.l.10. r. *may be proved*. p.11.l.10.r. *truly ancient*. p.16. l.8.r.*order sake*. l.ult.r.*of false*. p.20.l.10.r.*of Prelates*. p.16.l.11.r.*forme of Liturgie*. p.24.r.*in the Test*. l.26. r. *Commandements of men*. p. 28. l. 23.r.*grievances*. p.31.l.18.r.*accommodate*. p.34. l.11.r.*and is surest*. p.38.l.9.r.*out of the way*. p.50. l.6.r.*said Articles*. p.66.l.4.r.*and lay*. p.67.l.14. r. *indicare*.

CASES OF CONCIENCE.

CASE I.

Whether Dioceſan Biſhops (as they are commonly called) be by Divine right.

THe anſwer is negative, They are not. The reaſons are:

Firſt, Becauſe the Scripture knoweth no ſuch creatures as Dioceſan Biſhops; for the Biſhops mentioned in Scripture, are none other than Presbyters, whereof one or moe were ſet over their ſeveral congregations reſpectively, as we clearly reade, *Tit.*1. 5, 7. *Act.* 20. 17, 28. So *Act.*14. 23. compared with *Philip.*1.

lip.1 1. So as Presbyters & Bishops in Scripture are convertible termes; every Presbyter a Bishop, and every Bishop a Presbyter.

Secondly, Because all such prelaticall jurisdiction and domination as our Diocesans usurpe and exercise, is expresly forbidden by Christ himselfe, as *Mat*. 20,25,26. *Mark*.10. 42,43. *Luke* 22.25,26.

Thirdly, Because the Apostles condemned all such jurisdiction and domination as our Prelats use: As 2 *Cor*. 1. 24 2 *Cor*.11.20. 2 *Thess*.2.4. 1 *Pet*.5.3. 3 *Joh*.9.10.

Fourthly, Because Apostles themselves, whose successors Prelats pretend to be, never used any such jurisdiction as the Prelats doe, neither in Ordination of Ministers, nor in excommuni ation, (both which they doe most grosly abuse) nor in making of Canons, or setting up or imposing of Ceremonies, both of meer humane invention, which the Apostles

ſtles utterly condemned, *Gal.* 4.9.10. *Col.* 2.8, *&c.*

Fiftly, Becauſe the Prelats are never able to prove by any demonſtration from Scripture, that their juriſdiction is of Divine authority: their allegations are meere pervertings of ſcripture; as they alledge firſt, Chriſts ordaining twelve Apoſtles, and ſeventy Diſciples; here was an inequality (ſay they) *Ergo* a ſuperiority of juriſdiction. But neither can hee prove here any ſuch authority, as they pretend, or much leſſe any ſubordination of the ſeventy, unto the Twelve; for the Twelve neither ordained nor ſent forth the Seventy. Secondly, they alledge the poſtſcripts after the ſecond Epiſtle to *Timothy*; and after that to *Titus*; which ſay; That thoſe two were Biſhops. But 'tis cleare, that thoſe poſtſcripts are no part of the Text, as *Beza* well ſheweth. Nor are they to be found in the vulgar Latine tranſlation,

So D. *Hall* in his Booke of Epiſcopacie.

which was at the leaſt an hundred yeares after Chriſt. *Timothy* and *Titus* were both Evangeliſts, not reſident any where, but as the Apoſtles called them from Country to country, as we read in *Pauls* Epiſtles: and if they were to bee called Biſhops, according to the ſcripture, they muſt have beene Biſhops over one Congregation reſpectively. Thirdly, they aledge thoſe ſeven Angels, 1 *Revel.* 2 & 3. Theſe (ſay they) were ſeven Biſhops. This they can never prove. And if Biſhops, yet Dioceſans they were not, ſeeing for ſome hundreds of yeares after, there were no ſuch Dioceſſe extant. And our laſt Tranſlation, in the contents of the ſecond Chapter of the *Revelation* calls thoſe Angels the Miniſters of thoſe Churches. And for the Angel to be meant of one ſingle man, doth imply many abſurdities, as that God ſhould deſtroy a whole Church for one mans ſake: for God threatneth

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the Angell of Ephesus, if hee repent not, to remove his Candlesticke out of his place, to wit, that whole Church. But God never doth so; there is not in all the whole scripture any one example, that God ever rooted out a whole State or Church, generall or particular, for one mans sinne, be he Magistrate or Governor. And if God for one pretended Prelates sin, should remove or destroy a whole Church, as that of Ephesus; as there he threatens the Angell, who alone is charged with one onely sinne, which was a declination from his first love: Then what security or safety can the whole Church or State of England long promise to it selfe, so long as it harboreth in the bosome and bowels thereof such a crew and confederacy of most notorious and apostatised Prelates, who have not now declined in some degrees from the faith formerly professed, but have

openly

openly oppreſſed and perſecuted the Preachers and preaching of the Go-ſpel, and that even unto bloud? And againe, to goe about to proove the lawfulneſſe of Prelacy by the Word of God, from a word of a darke and figurative ſignification, againſt cleer and expreſſe teſtimonies of Scripture to the contrary, is moſt abſurd and too preſumptuous. For, for Angell here to ſignifie a Prelate, cannot poſſibly, becauſe the Scripture elſewhere (as before) damneth all Prelacy in the Church of Chriſt. And there be many other reaſons to confute them, that theſe Angells were no ſuch Biſhops, other than Scripture Biſhops, as aforeſaid: and that which was ſpoken to one, was by a Senechdochæ ſpoken to all, as is uſually in Scripture, and cleare in all thoſe ſeven Epiſtles.

Sixtly, The wiſeſt and learnedeſt of the Prelats at this day among us, doe warily decline the Scripture in

this

this point, & dare not ſtand to their authority, as being point blanke againſt them: but they fly to Cuſtom and antiquity, as the Papiſts doe for all their unwritten Traditions.

CASE II.

Whether the next Age immediately ſucceeding the Apoſtles, be not a ſufficient warrant for Prelaticall juriſdiction, ſeeing it may be mooved (ſay they) that there were then Biſhops.

THe Anſwer is negative: firſt, becauſe it is not a ſufficient warrant to build the government of the Church upon any Humaine example, which hath not expreſſe warrant from Gods Word. Secondly, Becauſe thoſe who were there called Biſhops, cannot be proved to have been Dioceſan Biſhops, or

or to have had or exercised such a jurisdiction as our Prelates usurpe. Thirdly, could that be proved, yet being not according unto, but directly against the Scripture, we ought not to regard it. Fourthly, the very next age after the Apostles, produced many grosse errours and superstitions, as *Eusebius* tells us, and as the Apostles premonished, *Act.* 20.29. yea, they complained of it in their own times, while they yet lived: *For the mysterie of Iniquity* (saith *Paul*) *doth already worke, &c.* which mysterie was, that of Prelacy, as appeares clearely from that Text, where the Man of sin who exalts himself over the Church, is set forth as the head and top of that mysterie, namely of the Hierarchy, which is and hath been the *Lerna* or source of all iniquity. And *Jerome* who lived in the fourth Century said, That *Prelation over the rest of the Ministers, was a thing of humane presumption, and not*

2 Thess. 2.7.

of

of Divine Ordination: and though it was firſt deviſed for a remedy againſt ſchiſme, yet it proved in time the greateſt ſchiſme that ever was, namely the ſchiſme of Antichriſt, and all his crew of Prelates from Chriſt; the Hierarchy being a meer enmity againſt Chriſts kingdome, betweene which two there is as great a Chaſma or gulfe as between Paradiſe and Hell.

CASE III.

But ſeeing Epiſcopacy is of very great and reverend antiquity (as they ſay) is it not beſt to reduce the preſent Prelacy to the antient condition of Biſhops in the Primitive Church.

NO; unleſſe they can proove theſe Biſhops to bee ſuch as Gods Word alloweth. Wee

reverence that antiquity which is joyned with verity: But antiquitie without verity is oldneſſe of error, as ſaid old *Tertullian*. When one asked *Chriſt*, *If it were lawfull for a man to put away his wife for every cauſe?* Chriſt gave no indulgence at all, but reduced that antient abuſe among the Iewes, to the primitive inſtitution of God in Paradiſe.

Mat.19. 3.

Secondly, The matter in hand is of higher moment, than to be regulated by any humane ordinance, or reduced to any antiquity, other than the Scripture it ſelfe. For the thing here in queſtion concernes no leſſe than the honour of Chriſts Kingdome, and his royall prerogative in the government of his kingdome, as we ſhall further ſee.

Thirdly, that which is originally vicious, cannot by tract of time bee made good. Cuſtome, we ſee, hath not made Prelates better, but worſe and worſe in all ages. An evil egge brings

brings forth an evill Bird. And Christ saith, *An evill tree cannot bring forth good fruit.* And, *Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall bee hewen downe and cast into the fire.* And *Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be plucked up by the roots.* And, *Either make the tree good, and the fruit good; or make the tree evill, and the fruit evill.* If therefore the tree of Prelacie be originally, and in its owne nature evill, as having no foundation in Scripture, as being none of Gods planting, it ought to be so far from being a patterne for its antiquity, as it ought utterly to be rooted up, as being a novelty, and not antiquity: for that only is truly currant, which is antiently true.

Mat.7.17.

Mat.15.13.

Mat.12.33.

CASE IV.

But if the Prelacy be plucked up and quite taken away, what government shall be left for the Church of God?

FOr resolution whereof wee are to consider these necessary things: First, That that Government alone be set forth, which Christ himselfe hath left us in his Word. For who but the King and Law-giver of his Church and kingdome of Grace, should give Lawes, and appoint how it shall be governed? Secondly, we are not to think that Christ, who was the Law-giver of the Old Testament, was not also the Law-giver of the New, and hath left us sufficient direction therin for the government of his people both for faith and manners. Now

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in the Old Teſtament all muſt bee done according to the Pattterne ſhewed to *Moſes* in the Mount, even to the leaſt pin in the Tabernacle. So alſo for the Temple and the forme thereof, *David* received all in writing by the Spirit of God, 1 *Chr.* 28.12.19. No place is left, nor power given to men to invent any thing, or impoſe the leaſt ceremony in the worſhip of God. So in the New Teſtament is layd downe a perfect platforme of wholſome words, *which is profitable for doctrine, for reproofe, for correction, for inſtruction in righteouſneſſe; that the Man of God may be perfect, throughly furniſhed unto every good worke.* 2 Ti.1.13. & 3.16.

CASE V.

But we ſee great difference in mens opinions concerning that forme of Government which Chriſt hath left in his Word; What then ſhall we do in this caſe, or what is that forme of Governement which we ſhall pitch upon?

FOr anſwere hereunto: firſt, however all ſuch governement as is contrary unto, and expreſly condemned in the Word of God, ſuch as the Hierarchy is, ought in no caſe to be admitted or maintained. Secondly, as wee cannot doubt but that Chriſt hath left an exact preſcript forme of governement in his Word, for the Church of the New Teſtament; ſo we ought diligently, in the uſe of all good meanes, to enquire after that good old way, and to

to finde as much of it as wee can, and to follow what we know.

Thirdly, if after all our ſearch, there be not a full agreement in all godly mens judgements, in ſome things which ſeem ſomwhat more difficult or doubtfull; we muſt not therefore either reject ſo much as is cleare, or yet breake Communion and fellowſhip with thoſe Churches which differ from us in judgement or practiſe, ſo long as they maintaine not any government which cannot be warranted by the Word of God: holding that rule of the Apoſtle, *Let us* (ſaith he) *as many as be perfect, be thus minded, God ſhall reveale even this unto you. Nevertheleſſe, whereto we have already attained, let us walke by the ſame rule, let us mind the ſame thing.* Phil.3.15,16

CASE VI.

CASE VI.

How can the Church be without prelates, in these respects especially: 1. For ordaining of Ministers. 2. For inflicting of Censures. 3. For calling of Synods. 4. For determining of doubts arising in matters of Faith. 5. In appointing of Ceremonies. 6. For Orders sake. 7. For Confirmation of children. 8. For dedication of Churches. 9. For the forme of Doctrine.

(1) FOr answer hereunto, First in generall, there is no need at all of any such Officers in the Church as are not of any divine Institution, as Prelats are not, as aforesaid: yea, such officers, in stead of any profitable usefulnesse, are most unprofitable and pernicious: as the Lord saith to false Prophets, *I have*

Ier.23.32.

not

not ſent them, therfore they ſhall not profit this people at all.

Secondly and particularly, Firſt, (11)
Prelates are no way requiſite or neceſſary for ordaining of Miniſters: Firſt, becauſe they ordaine rather a new order of Prieſts, than true Miniſters; for which cauſe the Booke of Ordination calls them Prieſts: whereas true Miniſters are never called in the new Teſtament prieſts. Secondly, They ordaine no true Miniſters of the Goſpell (if wee may beleeve their practiſe) but rather a ſort of dumbe Prieſts: for when they have ordained a full Miniſter, (as they call it) having put the Bible into his hand, ſaying, *Take thou authority to preach the Word of God*; yet for all this hee may not, muſt not preach at all, till he have obtained the Prelates Licenſe, which he muſt purchaſe for a good fee. Again, they make ſuch Prieſts as are dumb dogs and cannot barke, being meere Ig-

noramuſes and Sir *John Lacke-Latines*; abuſing thoſe words, *Receive thou the holy Ghoſt*: And, *Take thou authority to preach the Word of God*. And laſtly, They make no true Miniſters of Chriſt, ſeeing they bind all with the Oath of Canonicall obedience, to be ſubject to their lawleſſe laws, in the execution of their Miniſtry.

Secondly, There is no uſe nor need of Prelates for inflicting of Cenſures. Their power & practiſe of Excommunication is altogether unlawfull, a meere uſurpation, and contrary to Gods Ordinance; and that in many reſpects. Firſt, becauſe the Prelate is not the Paſtor of that Congregation whoſe member is cut off by Excommunication. Becauſe the Prelate doth it alone, hee or his Surrogate; and this perhaps either a Lay-man, or a dumb prieſt, without any conſent of the people. Thirdly, he excommunicates a man for every triviall cauſe, & that without

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out due ſummons, & raſhly, and for his fee abſolves him without any repentance or reformation, & without ſatisfaction to the people offended. Whereas excōmunication is the higheſt cenſure, & is to be done by the Miniſter & congregation joyntly, after much means uſed to reclaim the offēdor, & for grievous ſcandals; & not to be reſtored without hearty repētance, in a ſad, ſerious & ſolemn maner. Laſtly, if Prelats for the cauſes here alledged be of no uſe for the high cenſure of excommunication, how much leſſe need is there of thē for inflicting corporall or criminall puniſhment upon reputed Delinquents, as deprivation of liberty by impriſonmēt, of the miniſtry by deprivation, degradation, ſuſpēſion, deprivation of means and livelihood, by impoſing of intolerable fines, and reſtraining men from the exerciſe of their particular Calling, to the undoing of them and theirs.

Mat. 18. 17. & 1 Cor. 5.

Thirdly, for calling of Synods, cannot this bee without a Prelate? may not this be by a Law dormant, giving liberty when occaſion ſhall be, to have a Synod, for the better ordering whereof, a Moderator for the time being is by votes elected?

Fourthly, For determining of doubts ariſing in matters of Faith, what need is there for Prelats? Are they fit or competent Iudges in ſuch things? Yea, are they not herein egregious uſurpers, preſumptuous and arrogant men? Yea Antichriſts, in ſitting thus in the Temple of God, over mens conſciences, as Lords over mens faith? Is not this a meere evacuating of the authoritie and ſufficiencie of the Scripture, which is the ſole judge and rule of Faith? Yet this Prelates preſume to doe, and challenge as their proper right: ſo as in the twentieth Article, which is of the Authority of the Church, theſe words have beene of

later

later dayes foisted in, namely, that the Church hath authority in Controversies of faith.

Fiftly, Neither in appointing of Ceremonies are Prelates needfull: Yea, for prelates or Church, or any humane power to ordaine and impose Ceremonies to binde the consciences in the worship of God, this is expressely condemned and forbidden both by Christ himselfe, and by the Prophets, and by the Apostles. Man may not impose the least Ceremony in Gods worship: if hee doe, he therein denies Christ, *Col.* 2. 19. he holds not the Head. And yet the aforesaid Article boldly affirmes saying, The Church hath power to decree Rites and Ceremonies. So as this Article, whether meaning by Church the Prelates (as they meane it) or any other humane power, ought to be to Christians no article of Faith, or binding any mans Conscience.

Mat. 15. 9.
Ecc. 29. 13.
Col. 2. 8. 18.

Sixtly, For orders ſake: for what order-ſake are Prelates neceſſary, or any way requiſit? what order they keep all men know: & what order can there be in a Babyloniſh goverment, as the prelatical altogether is?

7. For confirmation of children: This alſo is a Babyloniſh Sacramēt; as if it did confer ſome grace *ex opere operato*, or ſome vertue dropping out of the Biſhops Lawn ſleeve. Indeed this confirmation is a pretty knack to win credit to the Prelacy frō the blinde Vulgar, which to everie wel taught Chriſtian is both ſuperſtitious and ridiculous.

8 For dedication of Churches; this is a moſt notorious Romiſh, Popiſh ſuperſtition, & is rather a meer prophanation, than any dedication, except it be to ſuperſtition & idolatry, as they at Rome do uſe their Temples: & they would make the world beleeve, that by their many ſuperſtitious ceremonies, in croſſings, cen-

ſings,

ſings, adorations, & the like, which they uſe in their dedication, there goes forth a vertue, by which holynes is infuſed into the wals & pews, eſpecially into their ſacred chancel.

Ninthly, for the form of Liturgy, if we goe no farther than our Service booke, which is an extract out of Romes Latine ſervice, Miſſall, or Maſſe-booke, as it is confeſſed in the Booke of Martyrs, the Romane Latine being turned into Engliſh: if there were no more in it than this, that it is the forme of Romes Worſhip, and ſo (as King *Iames* once called it) an ill ſayd Maſſe, it might a little ſtartle ſuch Chriſtians, as hold that Chriſtianity to be the pureſt, which hath leaſt conformitie with Antichriſt and his ſuperſtitiõs. For if wee be commanded to come out of Rome, & to have no communion with her idolatrous ſervice; let it then be well conſidered, whether Chriſtians may with a good con-

Vol.2.p.667. print.ed.1631

conſcience be preſent at the Engliſh Liturgy, which is for the maine, the Maſſe turned into Engliſh. For although it be objected, that it is purged from the *P*opiſh droſſe, yet if it ſhould be brought to the Touchſtone, or tried in the Text, let the wiſeſt then judge how free from *P*opiſh droſſe it is, when therein they ſhall finde Romiſh ſuperſtitious Ceremonies maintained and preſt upon mens conſciences, as the Surplice, Croſſe in Baptiſme, kneeling at the Sacrament, ſtanding at the Creed, attended with their ſeverall ſignifications, as if man had a power to ſet up any ſignificant Ceremonies in Gods worſhip, when as wee finde all kinde of ſignes and ceremonies in Gods ſervice under the Old Teſtament, though ordained by God himſelfe, to be utterly aboliſhed by Chriſt, and forbidden to Chriſtians under the New Teſtament: and much more all ſuch as

Gal.4.9,10.
Col.2.16.

are

are of humane invention: all which are of that nature, as the Apoſtle cals them, the *Yoke of Bondage*, to ſuch as are intangled therein; exhorting all Chriſtians to ſtand faſt in the libertie wherewith Chriſt hath made us free. And *Col.* 2. he plainly ſhewes all ſuch ordinances to be an evacuation of Chriſts death, and ſo an apoſtacie from Chriſt. And no Chriſtian, I hope, will plead for the uſe of humane ordinances in Gods worſhip, when Chriſt hath abrogated all ceremonies of divine inſtitution, and hath left no footſtep for any one Ceremonie in the New Teſtament, and flatly condemns all commandements of men in Gods Service: It beeing alſo a ſtrange preſumption for any man to think, that either he hath authority to preſcribe how God ſhould bee worſhipped, or that God ſhould be pleaſed with any ſuch will-worſhip; when in ſtead of being pleaſed, hee ſaith, *In* Gal. 5. 1.

vain they worſhip me, teaching for Doctrine the Comments of men. For ſurely with vaine worſhip God is neither pleaſed nor honoured.

Againe, ſeeing we are here fallen upon the conſideration or examination of the Service booke, let all wiſe hearted and well inſtructed ſchollers in Chriſts ſchoole, that have learned the art of ſeparating the pretious from the vile: but tell me what they think of Apocryphall bookes, publiquely read in Churches, as if they were the holy Scriptures? What of the whole Letanie, ſo ſtuffed with Tautologies or vain repetitions? What of the prayer in the Letanie and of the Collect, wherein Biſhops or Prelates are prayed for, being Antichriſtian and falſe Biſhops; and all other Miniſters are prayed for, as being the Curates of thoſe Biſhops: than which what can be a greater reproach and ſhame to the Miniſters of the Church

Church of England ? What of ſo many carvings of Scriptures into Epiſtles and Goſpels, with their ſeverall Collects, for the maintenance and celebration of Saints days, called Holydayes ? What of the lame and incongruous, yea ſenſeles tranſlations of thoſe ſundry Scriptures with the Pſalmes ? What of prayers at the buriall of the Dead ? What of Churching of women, *aliâs*, Their Purification, as ſome call it, and which anſwers to that under the Law ? What of Prieſtly abſolution ? with many more particulars, too long here to rehearſe. And in a word, What of ſo many prayers injoyned to be read, enough to blunt the edge of any true devotion, and ſo to tyre out the ſtrongeſt ſided Miniſter, as hee hath neither ſtrength nor time left for Gods Ordinance, namely the preaching of the Word. And (to ſay the very truth) this kind of long Service was deviſed by the

Popes ſucceſſively, to that very end, namely to entertaine the people with a blinde devotion, and to retaine them in ignorance, when now no roome was left for preaching, which was by this meanes thruſt by the head and ſholders out of their Churches. And thus what a deale of pretious time is taken up with a long, dull, and dead forme of prayer, which might and ought to be ſpent to the edification of Gods people on the Lords owne Day, which ſhould be ſanctified not in humane deviſes, but in Gods owne Ordinances, to the glory of Him who is the Lord of the day. I ſay againe (for I ſpeake nothing definitively, as paſſing myne own private judgement of theſe things) let this wiſe and grave Senate (now aſſembled for a thorow-reformation, and removall of all abuſes and grievan- and primarily in the matters of God and of Chriſt, maturely judge.

CASE

CASE VII.

Whether any set forme of a Liturgie or publique Prayer be necessarie to bee used in the publique Worship of God?

FOr answer: Indeed if it bee necessary to have unpreaching Ministers, and dumb dogs over the people of the Lord, who can nor preach nor pray, then it will bee no lesse necessary to have some form of Booke prayers or Liturgy for such to officiate by. And for this cause the Prelates have had some reason to hold up their Liturgy to the full, as without which there had beene nothing for their Mutes to do in the Church. Now though dumbe Priests have need of such a Liturgy, yet it doth not follow, that therfore able godly Ministers, that know how

how to fit their prayers to all ſuch ſeverall occaſions as do continually preſent themſelves (which a ſet prayer in a booke cannot do) ſhould be tied to any ſuch preciſe ſet forme.
1 Theſſ.5. For otherwiſe, this were to quench the ſpirit of prayer, and to muzzle the mouth of prayer, and to ſtoppe the courſe of Gods ſpirit, which doth wonderfully improve it ſelf in all thoſe both Miniſters and people, on whom God hath powred the ſpirit of grace and ſupplication, and who do by daily exerciſe grow unto ſuch a habit of prayer, and which doth powre it ſelfe forth in ſuch a life and power, as is not poſſible for any ſet read prayer to exerciſe or have. For true, fervent, effectuall prayer is that which is the hearts expreſſion by the Spirit of God. As
1 Cor.14.15 the Apoſtle ſaith, *I will pray with my Spirit*. And (*Phil.*1.19.) *Prayer is ſupplied by the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt*. This is that prayer which is firſt in the heart,

heart, before it come to the mouth, and is dictated by Gods ſpirit, before it be uttered with the lippes: whereas a read prayer is in the mouth before it can come unto the heart, which in prayer is a ſpeaking unadviſedly with the lips, before the heart hath firſt digeſted and ſuggeſted the matter. This is an abortive birth which never had a right conception, But a godly Miniſter that is beſt acquainted with the ſtate of his flocke, and of the church of God, can accordingly ſo inlarge and apply his prayer, by the ſupply of Gods ſpirit, as may be moſt uſefull to the Congregation, as beeing moſt accommodate to their ſpirits, when they finde the matter of the prayer to be that, the want whereof they are moſt ſencible of: ſo as there is here a concurrence of the ſpirits both of the Miniſter and people, which cauſeth a prayer to bee ſo much the more effectuall, lively,

power-

powerfull, and operative, and that not onely with God, but in the hearts of all thoſe whoſe joint praier it is. Whereas a read prayer is in compariſon, a dead and dull formal prayer, without any life or power either to prevaile with God, or to profit the people: as beeing ſuch a prayer as ſuits only ſuch Readers as are deſtitute of the ſpirit of Grace, and ſupplication, and of faith and ſanctification, and therefore ſuch as God regardeth not. So as a true Miniſter of Chriſt ought not to be tyed with the bonds and lines of a written forme of prayer that muſt bee read, foraſmuch as hereby the ſpirit of prayer in him is bound up, and both he and the people of God deprived both of the benefit of ſuch a gift, and of that profit alſo which the prevailing prayer of Chriſts ſpirit procures of God. Yea, not even a ſet written prayer which the Miniſter makes, & ſaith by heart, though he

he reade it not, and though it bee better to ſay it by heart, than to read it out of a booke, yet is, or can be ſo lively and powerfull as that prayer which is not tied to a ſet forme of words. From ſuch a prayer as is uttered by heart (as we ſay) the memory is more exerciſed, than the underſtanding and affections within him; there beeing now a ſuſpenſion of that worke of the ſpirit of ſupplication and grace, which breatheth forth with a lively power in a conceived prayer, wherein not the memory ſo much, as the whole mind, ſoule, ſpirit, & affections, have their joint operation.

But it may be objected, That the Reformed Proteſtant Churches beyond the ſeas have their ſet formes of publique prayer and ſacraments. 'Tstrue: but I take it that the Miniſters are not tied to thoſe forms, further than they will themſelves. As we ſee the Miniſters of the Kirke of

Scotland now in England, uſe no ſet formes of prayer, but doe diſcharge the duty of prayer with an excellent freedome of ſpirit, & with ſuch an apt accommodation thereof to the preſent condition of the hearers, and of the ſtate of Gods church, as that it ſerves greatly to the edification and raiſing up of the ſpirits of Gods people ſympathiſing with it, and is firſt (of all other kindes of prayer) to ſpeed with the Prayer-hearing God, who beſt knowes the meaning and language of that ſpirit of his, by which ſuch prayers are poured forth. And ſurely were this well exerciſed by our Miniſters in England, in publique, as I know it is by many both Miniſters & people in private, it would no doubt much facilitate and haſten the accompliſhment of that great worke of a thorow-reformation, ſo happily begun, and hopefully proceeded in, if fleſh and bloud bee not too

much

much consulted with, and humane policy (which should have no hand in setting out or authorising any devised forme of Gods worship, imposed on the conscience) too much relied upon.

CASE VIII.

What is the most ready and easie way or Method, of finding out or obtaining Christs government?

FOr resolution: It is usuall with those that stand for the Hierarchy, to stop all ways of finding this out, by laying many stumbling blocks in our way. But if we will goe roundly to worke, first of all, of necessity all false government, as that of the Hierarchy, must be quite taken out of the way, as the maine stumbling blocke. As hee that in-

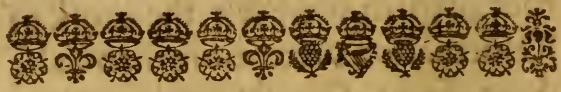
tends to build a new houſe in the place where the old ſtandeth, muſt firſt pull downe the old, and raſe it from the very foundation, that hee may lay a new foundation to beare up the new fabricke. But becauſe he that thus intends to build, doth uſually make a draught or model of his houſe before named: ſo it is thought neceſſary by ſome, that a modell of Chriſts government be firſt drawn up, according to which the new fabrick may be in a readineſſe to bee erected preſently upon the removal of the old.

This indeed ſtands with good reaſon, eſpecially for the ſatisfaction of all doubts, and for the better accommodation of the Church, and as a preparation of the materialls to the more ſpeedy ſetting forward of the worke of Reformation. And yet this I dare ſay, That if in the firſt place the Hierarchy, with all the trumpery and baggage of their Ce-

remonies

remonies & will-worſhip in Gods ſervice, were quite abandoned and taken away, ſo as the ground where theſe degenerate plants doe grow, were cleared and purged, that not a root of them were leſt, the work of Reformation were more than halfe done; ſo as Chriſts governement would even *ſponte ſua*, of its owne accord come in, and be ſet up without the noyſe of ſo much as a hammer; eſpecially in all ſuch Congregations where godly and diſcreet Miniſters are. Yet not ſo, as that we can expect ſuch a perfection at the firſt, ſpecially in this land, which hath been ſo long peſtered and corrupted with the tyrannous and licentious prophane government of the Prelates, and where godly Miniſters are ſo ſcarſe, and moſt men through long cuſtome, and want of meanes (as before) are not, by reaſon of ignorance (though perhaps too quicke ſighted in worldly matters)

ſo well fitted to apprehend, and to entertain ſuch an exact government as God requires, and his Word preſcribes.



CASE IX.

Whether, though the Prelacy with its uſurped juriſdiction, Lordſhips, Temporalties, Power, Pompe, &c. be quite removed out of the wayes, yet it be not expedient at leaſt, if not neceſſary, to retaine the name of Biſhops, as a title appointed to thoſe who are to be the principall among, and above other Eccleſiaſticall perſons in the government of the Church?

FOr anſwer: Firſt, we ought not to abuſe thoſe titles which the Scripture appropriates and ties to the perſons and office of the true Paſtors of the Church, by impropriating

ating them from the true owners, and transferring them to ſuch, as at the beſt (beeing conſidered as Paſtors over their ſeverall Congregations reſpectively) have but a common right with other Paſtors, and no peculiar title as proper to themſelves alone And wherefore ſhall ſuch onely be ſtill called Biſhops more than others? As having the only overſight over all other Churches, and their Miniſters, and that by being inveſted in a perpetuity of ſuch a dignity? What is this, but a clipping of thoſe wings, and a payring of thoſe clawes, which will in time grow againe. * *Can the Æthyopian change his skinne? or the Leopard his ſpots?* Can we ſo quickly forget, what ſpirit the ſpirituall ambition of theſe men is of? Or can we imagine that they will leave their old haunt, in frequenting the Court, and in courting the favor of great ones? and from whoſe corrupt flatteries

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not

not the eares of the beſt Princes can plead an exemption ? And may wee not juſtly feare, that if but the ſtump of this banefull tree be left unſtubd up by the roots, ſo as not ſo much as the bare long uſurped name thereof do remaine, may not the root ſtill ſpread it ſelfe under ground inſencibly ? and the ſtem through the ſent of water put forth ſuch ſprouts and fruits, as by the bitterneſſe thereof therof the whole land may be troubled ? And may it not be juſt with God, yet againe to bring more plagues upon this State, by its ſuffering of ſuch miſcreant remainders, when hee had given ſo faire an opportunity to cut them off, root and branch ? Did not *Saul* for ſparing one *Agag* loſe his kingdome ? And did not *Ahab* for ſparing the life of his falſe brother *Benhadad* loſe his owne life ? And were not thoſe Canaanites thornes and prickes in the Iſraelites eyes and ſides ? Nor is it ſo ſmall

Heb. 12.

1 Sam.

1 King.

ſmall a matter to alienate the property of a name or title from the right owners, to whom alone God hath made it peculiar and proper: For ſuch an alienation is an alteration not onely of the true property of the name, but alſo of the nature of that office to which it was firſt given of God. For (as is ſhewed before) the name of Biſhop is proper *quarto modo*, to every Paſtor over that Congregation to which hee is lawfully called: and the name *Epiſcopus*, or in Engliſh, Biſhop or Over-ſeer, ſets forth the office of ſuch a Paſtor over his flocke. So as to take away this name from the Paſtor, and to appropriate it to one ſingle man ſet over other Miniſters, to wit, one that is by man ſtiled and denominated a Dioceſan Biſhop; What is this but utterly to pervert & overthrow Chriſts ordinance, and the nature of his true Church, and the office of a true Paſtor, who being ſtripped of

his proper title, is withall ſtript of his office, and ſo of his flock, wherof another now is made the Overſeer or Biſhop, and the title and Office of a Curate onely is left him, according to the Collect for Biſhops and Curates. Or if there be a mentall reſervation to every Miniſter of a congregation, of the office of Paſtorſhip; yet when the title of Biſhop is given to one above him, even thus alſo is an invaſion made upon Chriſts owne title and prerogative, who is the onely Ἀρχιποίμην the chiefe Shepheard or chiefe Biſhop of his Church, beſides whom and above whom all the Paſtors acknowledge none. And if of Paſtors, ſome onely be called Biſhops, and the reſt not, here alſo Chriſts ſheepehooke is wrung out of his hand, as where he is called *the Shepheard and Biſhop of our ſoules*. So eaſie a thing it is by the alienation or impropriation of a name, to ſet up ſuch

1 pet.5.4.

1 Pet.2.25.

an

an office and government in the Church, as wherby Christs government & the proper office of his true Ministers, are cast to the ground & trampled under foot.

Moreover, if ever this governement of Bishops, falsly so called, shall bee set up or continued in maner aforesaid; yet farre bee it from those Worthies of the land, whose justice is so cleare and unpartiall in other things, and namely in the cutting off of all Monopolies in the civill State, to erect or ratifie, or any way to countenance such a Monopoly in Christs kingdome, so derogatory to his incommunicable prerogative, and to that stile and office wherein he hath so highly dignified and intrusted all faithful Ministers. For what a Monopoly is this, to take away the title wherein the Office of all true Pastors is comprehended, and to transfer it to one alone among many?

Ob. But here it may be objected, That the Reformed Churches beyond the ſeas, as even Geneva it ſelfe, have their Overſeers, which is a title and office equivalent to our Dioceſan Biſhops, *Epiſcopus* ſignifying an Overſeer: why then is it not as lawfull to have the like in England?

I anſwer: The caſe is farre different; for ſuch Overſeers or Moderators, as in other reformed Churches they are called (as in the Kirke of Scotland) are choſen by the Miniſters and Elders, and that but for one yeare, and whoſe office is to call the Synods at certaine fixed times, and to collect the votes, & the like. But ſome ſay, that our uſurping Biſhops ſhall bee perpetuall for their lives; and how farre the power of their place and dignity may be extended, eſpecially when they have their election from the Court, either immediate and abſolute *per ſe*, or by the means of a *Conge de l'er*, as

whom

whom so designed above, the Ministers of the Diocesse (in stead of the Deane and Chapter) are bound to elect. Or if they be but Triennial, & so to come under the visitation of a Trienniall Parliament; yet who knows but such spirits may so work as in time to make Parliaments as geason as heretofore? when some of them have confessed, that they never dreamed to see a Parliament againe. Or if they shall be continued from three yeare to three yeare, yet this is also more than is used in forreine Reformed Churches. And however, for them to retaine the name of Bishop still (as before) is against Gods Word, and not onely derogatory to Christs true Ministers for the present, but also very prejudiciall to their liberty, when such Bishops holding their favor in Court, and their neerenesse to the Chaire of State, may by that means grow awfull to those their Curates,

among whom ſome, and perhaps too many, may be found ready to proſtitute their officiouſneſſe unto their Biſhop, inſtead of Chriſt, out of a hope to be made the heires apparant of the Biſhopricke; which though it be now cropt and deplumed, yet will be ſtill a bait for ambition, which muſt be doing, and will rather play ſmall game than ſit out. All which conſidered, I leave it to the Wiſe to judge what may bee the conſequents thereof, & whether by this means either we or our children may come to ſee as great corruption both in doctrine and manners, as now we doe. For (as I ſayd before) the time may come, when God in his juſtice may deny this State the like opportunity (ſo armed with a neceſſity of reformation, as we neither could have wiſhed, nor any more can hope for) to reforme Epiſcopall inſolencie. Or ſuppoſe a poſſibility of Prelates to become no

worſe than as the Parliament ſhall leave them, yet the leaſt rag of Prelacie making a rent in Chriſts coat, (as it beeing the head of ſuch a Government as is condemned by the Word of God) ought no more to be pieced to Chriſts livery, ſeeing it deſtroyeth Chriſtian liberty, both in Miniſters and people. And all this (I ſay) ariſeth from the very name of Biſhop ſo miſplaced; for which cauſe it ought to be with the whole Biſhopricke utterly extirped; and that no leſſe, than the heathen Romans rooted out the very name of the *Tarquins*, for the tiranny which they had exerciſed.

CASE X.

CASE X.

Whether the whole Hierarchy being abolished, the 39 Articles which were agreed upon in 62, by the Archbishops and Bishops, &c. in both Provinces, doe any longer binde? or that Ministers are bound to subscribe unto them?

I Answer: First, That these 39 articles taken *conjunctim* together, no man can with a good conscience, rightly informed, subscribe unto them. For secondly, There be some of those articles which are very false; as Article 20, which saith, *The Church hath power to decree Rites and Ceremonies, and authority in Controversies of faith.* Both which are false (as before is noted) and were added since the same article was first made in King *Edward* the sixt his

his dayes. Againe, the 36 Article is no lesse false, which saith, *The booke of ordination of Archbishops and Bishops; and ordering of Priests, &c. doth containe all things necessary to such consecration and ordering. Neither hath it any thing that of it selfe is superstitious and ungodly. And therefore all so consecrated and ordered according to the Rites prescribed, &c. wee decree to bee rightly, orderly, and lawfully consecrated and ordered.* Now to this article all Ministers subscribe, although they be false Bishops consecrated after the order of Rome; and false Priests that are by false bishops so ordered.

Thirdly, Art. 3. it is sayd, *As Christ died for us, and was buried; so is it to be beleeved that he went down into hell.* Which going downe into hell, imports a locall going downe into the place of hell; which hath no proof in Scripture, nor holds any proportion or analogie of faith, but cros-

ſeth the truth of Scripture, and the current of all ſound interpreters, and therefore not to bee beleeved as Chriſts death and buriall.

Fourthly, ſome Articles are made of late by the enemies of grace, the Prelates, of ſo doubtfull and double a ſence (as thoſe eſpecially about Grace and Freewill) that they have procured a Declaration prefixed before the Articles, in the Kings name, prohibiting the free preaching of thoſe points according to the Scriptures. So as Miniſters canot reſolve what it is they ſubſcribe unto in the ſayd Article. And therefore it is neceſſary that the ſaid falſe Articles be wholly expunged, and the doubtful (as they pretend) more fully explained; and ſo the ſaid Declaration prefixed, taken away.

CASE

CASE XI.

Now all this done, and the whole Antichriſtian yoke in the Prelacy, with the burthen of all their Rites and Ceremonies removed from Chriſtians neckes: what is that particular form of government which is to be ſet up?

FOr anſwer: Firſt, we premiſed ſomething hereof in generall, namely, That Chriſts governement alone is to be ſet up in all true Chriſtian congregations, and ſo his yoke to be borne, as our glory, upon our neckes. But ſecondly, for further, and a more particular unfolding of this government of Chriſt over every true Church or congregation: Firſt, we are to enquire what the true Church of Chriſt is. And ſecondly, what is that governement

which Chriſt hath appointed over every ſuch Church.

For the firſt: A true Church of Chriſt is a congregation of true beleevers men and women, who by the Word of God preached, are ſeparated from the world, and the reigning luſts thereof, and declared to be ſuch by the open profeſſion of the true and right faith, and by the converſation of Chriſtian life conformable thereunto. Such is a particular viſible true Church or Congregation, and ſo is (as farre as wee can judge) a true branch of the holy Catholique Church, which is inviſible, comprehending the number of Gods Elect, and is apprehended only by faith, & not by ſight. Now every ſuch particular Congregation as aforeſaid, conſiſting of profeſſed beleevers of the knowne truth of God, according to which they frame the courſe of their life and converſation, is in it ſelfe an abſolute

Church,

Church, whoſe onely Governor for matters of faith, and the true worſhip of God, is Ieſus Chriſt. He it is that as King reigneth in this congregation, and in all the members thereof, they acknowledge none other Governor for matters of Religion, but Chriſt onely. For herein ſtands his kingly Office: and the Lawes by which this King reigneth, and governeth his Church, is his written Word. And his Vicegerent, by whom Chriſt is alwayes preſent with every one of his ſeverall Congregations, is the holy Ghoſt, which whoſo hath not is none of Chriſts. Rom. 8.

Now having thus defined what a true Church of Chriſt is, namely a congregation profeſſing the known true faith, every member thereof being able in ſome meaſure to give a reaſon of the maine points of faith, and to make proofe of their profeſſion by walking in a holy courſe of life: hence it appeares who they be

that are not admitted to bee members of this congregation or church of Christ, therein to participate of the holy Sacrament, untill their repentance and reformation; namely all ignorant and prophane persons, which neither beleeve aright, nor live accordingly. For the congregation of Christ is called the Communion of Saints, being sanctified by faith in Christ, and by his word and Spirit.

Act. 26.

The second thing is, to enquire and consider how this Church of Christ is to be governed. To finde this out is no difficulty. First, sure it is, that none but Christ is supreme and immediate Lord, King, and Governor of his Church, whether of the Catholique, or of every particular church or congregation rightly constituted (as aforesaid) so as no power on earth hath any authority to prescribe Lawes for the governement of this Church, whether for doctrine

doctrine or discipline, whether for faith or worship, but onely Christ, whose written Word and Law is the onely rule of this government; which Law all Princes (who are therefore called *Custodes utriusq; Tabulæ*) are bound by him, whose Vicegerents they are, to see well observed both by Ministers and people. Here then wee will speake of the Officers which Christ hath appointed over every Christian congregation: and those are either Ministers or other officers of the people. First for the Ministers, they are called by sundry titles, as (*a*) Bishops or Presbyters, (*b*) Pastors and Teachers, (*c*) Ministers, (*d*) Labourers, and the like. Their principall office is to * pray, to preach the word, to administer the Sacraments. And these Ministers, however stiled in Scripture, are all of equall authority, not one over another, nor one over many, nor many over one, each being

a Act.20. Tit.1.5.7.
b Eph.4.11.
c Luk.1.2. 2 Cor.11.23.
d Luk.10.7. 1 Cor.3.9. Act.6.4. Mat.28.20. Act.20.7. Mat.20. 25, 26.

ing in his place & peculiar congregation under Christ alone, as the King of his Church, to whom he is accountable: and under Christ, to the civill Magistrate, as being a subject.

Heb.13.17.

Quest. But here a question may be moved, whether a Synod of Ministers, or of the churches, have not power over any one Minister, and so over all the Congregations, either to censure particular persons or congregations, or to prescribe and impose orders, Rites, Canons, or the like?

Answ. For answer: Some are of opinion that a Synod hath authoritie to binde particular churches to such rites as they shall prescribe and impose. And they alledge that Synod or assembly of the Apostles, wherein were determined certaine observances which they sent and imposed on the churches of the new convert Gentiles, as necessary for them to observe, some wherof were

Act.15.

Iewish

Iewiſh ceremonies. Hence they conclude, That a Synod collected of the churches, hath power over particular churches, to ordaine and impoſe ceremonies as neceſſary to bee obſerved. But this act of the Apoſtles is no preſident or patterne for ſucceeding ages. The reaſon is firſt, becauſe the Apoſtles were inſpired with the holy Ghoſt, which wholly guided them in all matters of the Church; ſo as in that their determination they ſay expreſſely, *It ſeemed good to the Holy Ghoſt and to us, to lay upon you no greater burthen.* Now what Synod in any age after the Apoſtles could ever ſay, that they were infallibly inſpired and aſſiſted by the holy Ghoſt? If any can infallibly aſſure me hereof, that a Synod after the Apoſtles cannot erre, but that they can truly ſay, *It pleaſed the holy Ghoſt and us*: then I will obey all their Decrees.

Act.15.28.

Secondly, That injunction of the

holy Ghoſt and of the Apoſtles was but πρόσκαιρον, for that preſent time, for the avoyding of offences betweene Iewes and Gentiles, who in every city converſed together: Which *James* the Apoſtle alledgeth for the only reaſon of that determination. But we reade not in all the writings of the Apoſtles afterward, that they either ordained or impoſed the leaſt rite or ceremonie to bee obſerved in any of the Churches of God; yea, they expreſſely condemned all ſuch ordinances, as before is ſhewed.

Act. 15. 21.

But here another queſtion ariſeth: If particular congregations be not ſubject to bee ruled by Synods, or the like juriſdiction, what order can be expected, or what meanes is left for ordaining of Miniſters over every congregation?

For anſwer, briefely: Firſt for order; What better or ſurer order can be, than that which Chriſts

Word

Word hath ſet down ? And if in any thing doubts ariſe in a Congregation, they have other congregations with the Miniſters to conſult with. For although every particular congregation be an abſolute church, having no juriſdiction over it but Chriſts alone, and that immediatly; yet it is not ſeparated or divided from the neighbour churches, ſo as that it ſhould not hold communion with them, or a conſociation, communicating together in all mutuall offices of helpe, counſel, comfort, reſolution in doubts, advice in difficulties, and the like: this beeing the priviledge and benefit of the communion of Saints, which is not limited to one particular congregation onely within it ſelfe, but comprehendeth all the Members of the Catholique church, wherefoever they are viſible in any aſſemblies: ſo as if any one congregation fall into an errour, it is by others to bee ad-

monifhed and conuinced, that it may be reformed. If it fall into any foule herefie (which yet is not eafie in a well conftituted Church) it muft bee dealt withall accordingly as the cafe fhal require: the churches affembled muft labour to reduce it, and if after all meanes it proove incorrigible, when there is no remedie they muft renounce communion with that congregation. And if that congregation fhall bee further troublefome, in breaking the peace of the Churches, or of the civil ftate, it is liable to fuch punifhments as by the good lawes of the land are allotted to fuch and fuch offences. For although no power on earth hath power over mens confciences in matters of religion, yet God hath in his ordinance fet up civil powers and Magiftrates, whom he hath armed with authority to punifh fuch as doe openly tranfgreffe either the Lawes of God, or the juft Lawes of the

Rom. 13.

the civil ſtate. For the Magiſtrate is *Gods Miniſter*, both *for the puniſhment of evill doers, and for the praiſe and protection of them that doe well.* And for the better and more eaſie way for the civill Power to take cogniſance of things of that nature, it will become the duty of all the churches, in a Synod or otherwiſe to convince the parties offending, and if obſtinate, to complaine of them to the civill Magiſtrate. Thus it is with a congregation as it ſtands in relation to other Churches, and in a ſubjection to the civill power.

1 Pet. 2. 14.

Now for a congregation conſidered in it ſelfe, if a member therof do offend in any kinde, what is to be done, or who ſhall cenſure it? I anſwer: If the offence bee againſt the Law of Chriſt, or his governement over that congregation, then the ſame congregation hath power given from Chriſt to cenſure the Delinquent; when after all due

means

means he remains obſtinate and incorrigible; as 1 *Cor.*5. But if the offence be againſt the law of the civil State, he is then puniſhable according to that law, by the civill Magiſtrate.

But here another queſtion ariſeth, Whether the Miniſter or Paſtor of the congregation alone have power of cenſure committed unto him, or together with the congregation?

I anſwer: Together with the congregation; which therefore electeth certaine officers, ſuch as are moſt eminent for integrity, gravity, holineſſe, knowledge, and judgement in matters of the congregation, to repreſent the congregation, and to aſſiſt the Miniſter in government and correction of manners: And who fitter to take knowledge of home-delinquents, than ſuch as beſt know them? And who are likelieſt to uſe mercy, compaſſion, and moderation in ſuch cenſures,

and

and better means of the delinquents amendment, than such as are their godly neighbours?

And these officers, either for the gravity of their yeares or manners, are called Elders. The * Prelats cannot endure the name of lay Elders; but in Scripture we find them. For πρεσβύτερος, an Elder, is taken both for a Minister of the Word, and for a Lay Elder, as they call it: as, 1 *Tim.* 5.17. *Let the Elders that rule well, bee accounted worthy of double honor, especially they who labour in the Word and doctrine.* Where Elders plainly signifie both such as rule, and such as preach, distinct one from the other. So *Rom.* 12. 6,7,8. *He that ruleth* is a distinct officer from him that teacheth & prophecieth. And so, 1 *Cor.* 12.28. After Prophets or Teachers, are set Helps, governments, or helps in government, as our Translation hath it. These Governors then simply considered, were not Ministers

D. Hall, in his Episcopacy by Divine right.

of

of the Word, but Lay men, as they call them. We could produce ſome Antients that ſpeake of theſe lay governors or Seniors; but at preſent for brevities ſake wee omit them. The antient Church of the Iewes had ſuch Elders, as we reade, called Maſters of the Synagogue, *Act* 13.15. And if antiently, in and after the Apoſtles time, there were not ſuch Elders, how came it to paſſe afterward under Antichriſt, that the government of every particular congregation was delivered unto thoſe of the Laity, whom we call churchwardens and Side men, who are to aſſiſt the Miniſter in matters of the Church, though not in matter of cenſure, which the Prelacy hath wholly uſurped and monopolized to it ſelfe, having thruſt out and utterly exterminated, as much as in them lieth, the very name and memory of Lay Elders, had wee not ſome records thereof in the laſting monu-

monuments of the Scripture ? Yea, let the Prelates tell us, how all that Lay Elderſhip (as I may call it) of Chancellors, Commiſſaries, and the reſt, came to be ſet up, but to ſupply (in ſome ſort) thoſe antient Lay Elders, whom the Apoſtles had ſet up, and whom Antichriſt puld down, as being the main hinderance of the ſetting up of his Hierarchy ? For how had the Prelacie mounted to that height of power over the whole Church, had the Lay Elders ſtill continued in governing, with godly Miniſters, the ſeveral congregations reſpectively ? So as the removing of the Lay Elders, and the bringing in of Churchwardens and other Lay Officers into the church, all ſubject to the Prelates juriſdiction, and made their ſworne vaſſals, was the very up-ſetting of the Antichriſtian Throne in the Temple of God. And this is that order of government, without which the Pre-

lates cry out, There is no order. Whereas that order which the Apostles left, in governing the Church by Ministers ann Lay officers, is the onely true Order. Those words of Christ, *Goe tell it to the Church*, doe shew, That censure of incorrigible faults was in the power of every Congregation. So 1 *Cor.* 5. 4, 5. *&c.*

In the second place, to the former question concerning the ordaining of Ministers in every congregation, in case there be neither Diocesan Bishops, nor Synods to perform it: I answer, first, That most men doe greatly mistake that here which they call Ordination of Ministers. The Romanists have screued it up to one of their seven Sacraments, making the Imposition of hands upon the Priests head by the Prelate, to be the outward signe of that inward grace, which *ex opere operato* (as they say) is conferred upon the Priest.

And

And even many Proteſtants are of opinion, that Ordination cannot be performed but by a Prelate, or at leaſt by Miniſters onely, as without whoſe impoſition of hands it were no Ordination, or as if it did confer ſuch an order. Whereas the prime and proper conferring of this Order is by Chriſt himſelfe, inwardly calling and gifting a man for the work of the Miniſtry.

Secondly then, what is that χειροτονία, ordaining and appointing of Miniſters? and ἐπίθεσις τῶν χειρῶν, the Impoſition of hands, which the Scripture ſpeakes of?

I anſwer: χειροτονία, ſignifying properly a ſtretching out of the hand, it was uſed either in lifting up of the hands in token of ſufferage in election of officers, or in ſtretching out of the hand upon the head of the man choſen, for confirmation. Alſo when it was uſed by the Apoſtles, it pleaſed God to beſtow ther-

Act.8.17.
Mar.16.18.

with the gifts of the holy Ghost, and on some recovery of health. This was very frequent in the Apostles times: But afterwards in successive ages there was no such gift annexed to the laying on of hands. Secondly, Therefore it was of use according to its antient and ordinary custome in sufferages in elections of officers, to declare assent and approbation of those for such and such places, when after prayer hands were layd on them.

But by whom was this Imposition of hands used at the choice of Ministers? I answer, By those who gave their sufferages or votes to the election; and those were sometime the congregation it selfe, and sometime others at their request joyning with them: as we reade, *Act. cap.6.* 5, 6. And all Ecclesiasticall stories tell us, that antiently the election of Ministers was by every congregation respectively. So as to them also

of

of right belonged the laying of their hands, as a token of their approbation and confirmation of him that was ſo choſen to that office. And though we reade in one place, That the Apoſtle layd his hands upon *Timothy*, as 2 *Tim.* 1. 6. yet in another we reade, (as 1 *Tim.* 4. 14.) that the Presbyterie layd their hands upon him. Which Presbyterie comprehends as well the Elders of the people, as thoſe of the Miniſtry. Accordingly, wee exclude not the Elders or Miniſters of other neighboring congregations from joyning in that worke, for aſſiſtance eſpecially in prayer, for a bleſſing upon the new choſen Miniſter. For ſo farre muſt we be from excluding any in this kinde, that wee highly commend conſociation and communication of gifts for aſſiſtance, where it may be conveniently had. Onely reſerving to each congregation that peculiar intereſt and right, which

every true Church of Chriſt hath in chuſing their owne Miniſters, and other Church officers.

And this ſtands with good reaſon: for not onely antiquity both in and from the Apoſtles times pleadeth for this, but even naturall reaſon and equity. For reaſon willeth that ſuch as chuſe ſhould ratifie.

Secondly, Thoſe who give the maintenance ſhould chuſe the Officer.

Thirdly, Who have commonly better Miniſters than thoſe Congregations, that upon good advice and counſell chuſe them themſelves.

Fourthly, Where is greater love betweene Miiniſter and people, than where the liberty of ſuch a choyce is enjoyed.

Fiftly, What vertue at any time doth a Prelates impoſition of hands adde to Miniſters ſo ordained by him? Or what bee thoſe Miniſters whom Prelates uſually place over the

the people? And I would aske any reaſonable Chriſtian, whether hee would not rather have the approbation, prayer, and impoſition of hands, of the pooreſt godly man, than of the moſt glorious Prelate? Yea, though hee were ſtiled even Grace it ſelfe? For as *James* ſaith, *The effectuall fervent prayer of a righteous man prevaileth much.* It is not ſayd, The prayer of a great or learned man. Iam.5.16.

CASE

CASE XII.

How far may and ought true reformed Christian Congregations to hold communion among themselves, and with other Reformed Churches?

FOr answer in generall: First in generall, it is agreeable to good and approved examples in Scripture, to make firme leagues and faithfull Covenants for the maintenance of the true faith and religion of Christ. See for this, 2 *Chron.* 15. 12, 13. and Chapter 34. 31, 32, 33. *Ezra* 10. 3, *Nehem. cap.*9. 38.

Se~~verally~~condly, in particular: It stands both

both with Christian piety and prudence, for all the members of a particular Church or congregation, to enter into a firme covenant among themselves, to maintain a holy communion together in the profession of the truth, and practise of a holy life, as becommeth the communion of Saints.

Thirdly, It stands with the like Christian piety and prudence, to hold a sweet and inviolable bond and communion with all other churches or congregations rightly constituted, as we conceive, according to Christs ordinance, and walking according unto it.

Fourthly, If there be any Christian Churches that doe in some small circumstances differ from us, in that forme of government which wee conceive and beleeve Christ hath set up in his Word, so as therein they may seem to come short of that exactnesse that is required, nor yet

are able to attaine unto it, either in regard of ſome outward difficultie or human imperfection and frailty, the judgement being as yet not fully enlightned and perſwaded (concerning which the Apoſtles rule is, *Let every man bee fully perſwaded in his owne minde*) wee do notwithſtanding not with-hold from them the right hand of fellowſhip; but hold communion with them as the churches of Chriſt, they holding the Orthodox Truth, and the ſubſtance of the government, which is ſuteable to the Church of Chriſt, and joyning with us againſt the Common Adverſaries of the Goſpell: concluding with that excellent ſaying of our Savior Chriſt, *They that are not againſt us, are on our part.*

Mark.9.40.

THE

The EPILOGVE, or *Conclusion.*

HAving thus freely and faithfully (though briefely, as the present straits of time would permit) declared what I have and doe conceive and beleeve concerning Christs kingdome, and that forme and frame of the government thereof in his Church, as I finde it recorded in the Scripture, whereof I am in my conscience fully perswaded: as my earnest prayer and trust is, That Christ by his spirit and Word will leade his into all truth necessary to salvation; so my hope is, that however perhaps those things which I have here delivered according to the simplicity of my

conſcience, will not ſo bee reliſhed of all, but that they wil ſeem bitter, eſpecially to the ignorant and carnall minded, who ſavour not the things of Chriſt: yet my confidence is, that all the wiſe hearted and wel affected to Ieſus Chriſt (For, *If any man love not the Lord Ieſus Chriſt*, (that is, love not to have Ieſus Chriſt ſet up as Lord over their ſoules) *let him be Anathema Maranatha*) will embrace Chriſts yoke, and to the uttermoſt of their power labour to advance his throne in all Churches; or if that, through Sathans malice cannot bee effected, yet that they will ſet him up as ſole Lord and King over their owne ſoules, and ſo will joyne in communion with all thoſe that doe or ſhall deſire heere to ſerve Ieſus Chriſt according to that purity of conſcience which is required in every true Chriſtian (as the Apoſtle profeſſed of himſelfe) and in that way wherein the name

1 Cor. 16. 22.

2 Tim. 1. 3.

of

of Chriſt ſhall bee moſt magnified, and his kingdome exalted heere on earth.

And this ſhall the better be done, if a Law be made this preſent Parliament, that as Antichriſts kingdome in the Prelacy ſhall and muſt be caſt out, ſo Chriſts kingdom may bee freely ſet up in this kingdome, while his people (even as many as will) are ſuffered freely to enjoy Chriſts Ordinances in their puritie, and ſo may at length recover that Chriſtian liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made us free, and for which his precious bloud was poured forth, and whereof this Land by the Hierarchy hath beene till now deprived: it being our hearts deſire, rather to live under Chriſts governement in this our owne native Countrey, than for want thereof, bee forced to flye into forreigne parts; where how can wee

ſo

ſo ſweetely enjoy Chriſt; without the bitter remembrance of our Native Soile, which wee ſhall never ceaſe to wiſh worſe unto, than to our owne Soules.

FINIS.

we will hear thee again of this matter. Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed, &c. We doubt not but there are many within the Province; whose hearts *the Lord will open, to attend to what is here said.* Our desire is to do good unto all, even unto those that are our greatest adversaries; and not *to be overcome of evil, but to overcome evil with good.* If they mock at us (as they did at *Paul*) yet surely, *Our Judgment is with the Lord, and our work with our God; He that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is unjust, let him be unjust still:* But we hope better things of you, that have submitted to the Presbyterian-Government. For whom we pray, *That the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our* Lord Jesus Christ, *that great Shepherd of his sheep, through the bloud of the everlasting* Covenant, *would make you perfect in every good work, to do his Will; working in you, that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through* Jesus Christ; *to whom be glory for ever and ever,* Amen.

Isa.49.4.

Heb.13.19,20.

Subscribed in the Name, and by the Appointment of the Assembly,

George Walker, Moderator.
Arthur Jackson, *Edmund Calamy*, } Assessors.
Roger Drake, Scriba.
Elidad Blackwell, Scriba.

FINIS.

[illegible]ination. [illegible] to the [illegible]
READER, be pleased to [illegible] unwilling to [illegible]
let every one, [illegible] these [illegible] and
advise [illegible]
vent[illegible] It is no[illegible] why ancient men an[illegible]st; fo[illegible]
[illegible]der the Prelatical [illegible]. Did

John Christie